



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314**

March 31, 2020

**Office of the Assistant Director  
Directorate for Geosciences**

Dear NSF Geosciences Community:

Staff throughout the GEO Directorate want to express our hope that you, your family, friends, colleagues, and students are well and safe during these unprecedented circumstances. We understand that you face many complex and stressful situations in trying to navigate the many changes to your personal and professional lives and that there are significant impacts. We are here for you and hope that you will reach out to your Program Officers and other GEO points of contact for support and guidance.

Rest assured that the agency is operational, and we are working with our many partners to support the important scientific research conducted by all of you. GEO staff are on duty and available to communicate with you. We are particularly interested in cataloging any challenges you have experienced related to your NSF-sponsored research, including solutions if appropriate, as a potential guide for other Principal Investigators.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we, along with you, transition to this new reality, and work together to address your questions and concerns. We are encouraged by the efforts of our NSF colleagues and especially appreciative of all of you in the community who will assist with our merit review process, as seamlessly as possible, through virtual review panels, committees of visitors, and other events. Thank you.

Below you will find resources that NSF and the Geosciences Directorate are providing to help you navigate this very challenging situation. We hope this information proves useful to you and that you will use it in conjunction with your regular communications with NSF Program Officers.

Our support to you is unwavering. We are all in this together. We encourage you to take all recommended precautions to protect yourselves and your families against COVID-19. For public health-related information, please visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Sincerely,

William E. Easterling  
Assistant Director for Geosciences

Scott Borg  
Deputy Assistant Director for Geosciences

## **COVID-19 Information for the Geosciences research community**

**Website:** NSF has established a central website for information about the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): [nsf.gov/coronavirus](https://www.nsf.gov/coronavirus). Please check this website and related links below frequently for updates. The website includes important links and information on:

**Administrative Relief:** For current awardees, NSF has issued [Important Notice No 146 to the Community Regarding COVID-19](#) and [Guidance on NSF's implementation of the Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Memorandum \(M-20-17, Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) due to Loss of Operations\)](#). These documents contain extensive descriptions of flexibilities available to you to support your health and safety as well as your work. Questions about policies described in the guidance should be directed to [policy@nsf.gov](mailto:policy@nsf.gov).

**Program Deadlines:** NSF is assessing program deadlines on an ongoing basis, and at present we are focusing on deadlines through the end of April. Our intent is to offer extensions where feasible, while remaining mindful of internal timelines for conducting a full merit review process prior to award decisions. Please note, that for the many GEO programs that operate without proposal submission deadlines, we do not expect a change in the ability to submit proposals to NSF, but we encourage you to contact your Program Officer should you have any difficulties or concerns.

**Review Panels:** If you have agreed to serve on a merit review panel, please note that these will be conducted remotely, at least through May, with ongoing reassessment for May and beyond. We greatly appreciate the effort that reviewers and panelists put into this invaluable assistance to NSF. Please contact the cognizant NSF Program Officer if you have questions about panel plans and logistics.

**Other NSF-Funded Meetings:** NSF is encouraging Principal Investigators of upcoming NSF-funded Conferences and other meetings scheduled to take place in the coming weeks to either reschedule these meetings or to conduct them as all-virtual gatherings.

**Major Facilities and Contracts Regarding COVID-19:** Many of our GEO-supported facilities and labs have been adversely affected by COVID-19. We are in constant communication with our facilities, and they have assured us that they are putting the health and safety of their employees, researchers, and visitors first. They are also striving to maintain essential activities and to serve as a community resource. Information regarding NSF-sponsored Arctic and Antarctic field research locations is rapidly evolving and updates can be found on the [OPP webpage](#). The [National Center for Atmospheric Research](#) and the [University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System](#) have changed their operating status. Please check the facility websites for updates or contact your cognizant program manager. We will continue to work with our facility partners to optimize capabilities within the bounds of public health parameters, and to ensure a return to full capacity once this crisis has passed.

**Educational Activities and Grants:** Several questions and answers in the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) About the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) for NSF Proposers and Awardees](#) focus on education-related awards, such as Research Experiences for Teachers and Research Experiences for Undergraduates.

### **Rapid Response Research support related to COVID-19:**

NSF issued a Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) that invites research proposals via NSF's Rapid Response Research (RAPID) mechanism on topics of specific relevance to COVID-19.